

consist because they cannot be sold at 50 cents a bushel mean a smaller crop of potatoes for 1918 and less seed for 1919 and higher prices for two years.

We can pass all the food regulations under the sun forbidding the summary execution of the little hen; but with chicken feed at from \$4.15 to \$4.50, which used to be high at \$1.10, what do you purpose feeding the little hen?

For ten people who kept hens in 1916 only one is keeping chickens to-day. I look down a typical New England village street. Nineteen families live on this street. Formerly every family kept chickens. To-day only two keep chickens, and one family had a poultry plant for 150 layers for winter use; and this village is typical of thousands from the Mississippi to the Atlantic. Fewer eggs and less fowl for the table next year!

Chicken Feed at \$75 a Ton.

Figure wheat at \$2.25 a bushel. That is \$75 a ton for chicken feed. No farmer can raise milk, veal, pork, beef, fowl, eggs, butter, cheese at that cost of food and not go broke in a year. As a matter of fact, add freight, jobber's profit and hauling to that cost and many feeds stand closer to \$80 for the farmer than \$75.

What does the farmer do? Only two courses are possibly open to him. He can buy feeds diluted 40 per cent. with non-essentials, such as dust sweepings and screenings, and at time of writing not one of these is selling under \$45 to \$50 a ton retail. They formerly cost from \$22 to \$29. Or he can cut down production to exactly what feeds he can raise on his own farm; and with the machinery and labor at present costs the farmer's only safe course is contraction, not expansion.

What, then, are prospects for 1918-19? Less milk, less butter, less cheese, less meat, less shoe leather, fewer eggs, less fowl, fewer potatoes. It doesn't matter much at how low a level we spike prices down, if we don't spike production up there will not be milk and butter and cheese and meat and leather and eggs and fowl to go round. And if we let prices soar the average purse can't afford to buy, and the surplus is thrown back on the farmer's hands a dead loss; and the farmer lessens food products still more.

Must Start Planting at Once.

If this be "famine hysteria" it is a very bad and a very real attack; and it is time somebody got busy with a remedy while the planting is good. Six weeks from now the planting season will be past; and what we don't do between now and June we can't do till 1919.

Face that and don't blink it! Philosophic explanations after the planting season won't fill a single hungry stomach or quell a single food riot any more than explanations warmed our fingers with our breath during the fuel famine last winter. What we are going to do we have to do now.

We have, in fact, to decide right now whether the war is to be won by spiking prices down or spiking production up. Saving food is a good catch phrase. Multiplying food in superabundance is better.

"Please let me grow up into leather and beef," pleaded the picture of a pathetic little calf sent out by one food committee. "Yes," answered a friend of mine, who has a hundred head of fine stock down on a Virginia farm, "but at the present price of feed and milk, it will cost \$150 to let me grow up, and I won't bring \$40 on the hoof at the end of a year; and who is going to pay for the loss of \$110 on each little scrub bull-calf, me?"

Indignant About the Posters.

"If that fool food committee sends me another such poster, I am going to crate every scrub calf that comes with the big poster on the side of the crate, and ship it straight to it; and I have a mind to send it my chicken feed bill for these last two months. Eggs will stand about the value of gold filling for a front tooth."

Sitting on prices and passing out advice from an office chair won't give us food if we don't plant now.

Some of us have a feeling of gratitude that as to grain we have at least saved the situation. We have guaranteed the farmer a price that has stabilized the market and assured him a profit, and we have kept the price of bread from soaring sky high to the consumer. But have we? or are we again only hugging fool theories to ourselves instead of facts?

Wheatless days—whether you spell that less-wheat or wheatless—don't sound to me like superabundance of wheat. Let us take those "famine hysteria" household accounts again!

Before the war one could buy flour for

from \$5 to \$8 a barrel. At time of writing flour is retailing at \$1.75 for 24½ pounds, or \$14 a barrel; and we are told if price fixing had not intervened it would be retailing at \$30 a barrel. But wait—let us figure costs to me as a householder very closely.

The other day I bought 24½ pounds of flour at \$1.75; but to get that flour I had to buy 24½ pounds of other substitutes which I did not need, rice, corn flour, tapioca, cereal foods. The substitutes, which I did not need cost me \$2.64. That is to get those 24½ pounds of flour I had to spend \$4.39, which is at the rate of \$35.12 per barrel for flour, or what would be equivalent to \$7 a bushel for wheat.

Wheat you recall is stabilized at \$2.25 a bushel. Wheat at \$3 a bushel would be cheaper to the consumer than flour at \$14 a barrel plus substitutes at \$21 plus. And the rather ghastly part of it was when we came to use that corn flour, it had been so beautifully kiln dried to save it from the killing frost of last September that it tasted exactly like plaster of paris.

"It gave," to quote the kitchen cabinet minister of our household interior, "it gave the whole family the stomach ache and made the dog sick. I can't even use it as chicken feed. I am going to try it as fertilizer for the vegetable garden."

And that brings up all the numerous complaints about ground glass in flour. Trace those complaints to their source and you invariably find kiln dried flour from crops ruined in that September frost which cut our boasted corn crop figures in just half.

Here again we have been feeding on theories instead of facts; and they have

given a great many people pretty bad attacks of indigestion. We have been blaming the railroads for failing to haul the frosted corn to market before it spoiled on the farmer's hands. (That's right! Pass the buck, but buck the facts!)

Now, as a matter of farm practice, you can put frosted corn in a silo green and feed it safely; but you can't feed it husked and ground with safety. It is mouldy; and no farmer is going to risk a \$150 cow on mouldy corn. He would rather pay \$80 for feed and feed only a tenth as much to his \$150 cow than \$35 for mouldy corn and lose his \$150 cow. As a matter of fact, mouldy corn is dear at nothing a ton, however much we may use it as a substitute for humans.

"Why not let the price of milk drop \$1 a hundredweight now?" asked the expert official of a State committee. "Milk surely can't cost the farmers as much now. They can turn their cows out to grass March 30."

And I venture to answer there will not be one dairy cow turned to grass this year between the Mississippi and the Atlantic before May 1; but food from paper plans is an altogether different thing from food from the field; and unfortunately food grown on paper and windy theories doesn't feed us, any more than fuel advice warned us last winter.

To be sure, against famine there are all sorts of safeguards under way of which the public is being told nothing. The Food Administrators of every country in the world to-day know the danger and are forearming themselves against it. They are quietly storing great quantities of food in great warehouses in congested centres, which by the same token explains

some of the big enemy fires in these big centres.

That is wise and that is well—especially in the case of England, 3,000 miles distant from her food fields; but how much wiser and how much better to forever insure against famine by such a superabundance of food that no one need go hungry? Spiking prices down won't produce food; but a superabundance of food will break prices down and spike them down without any man-made laws.

There was no spiking of potato prices last year. Prices were high; and with high prices the farmer dared to plant and raise a record crop. To-day potatoes are the only cheap food on the table. We spiked the price of wheat at \$2.25; and chicken feed screenings are \$4.50 a hundredweight.

Danger Signals of Famine.

High prices may not mean famine; but they are a danger signal pointing the way to that gaunt figure; and they cause more labor unrest than all the walking delegates under the sun. There are lands enough in this country, and there are hands enough itching to be back cultivating the lands—to produce a superabundance of food for the whole world in a single year—if—ay—there's the rub—that eternal if—if the producer can get enough for his produce to pay him a profit.

That's the whole rub and the nub of the food famine business.

Can the producer be paid enough profit to make him double and quadruple his output? Can he be given double prices and at the same time cut prices half to the consumer?

He can.

And he must; for to quote a farm neighbor of mine: "Big crops are the only cure to bust food prices wide open."

Spiking prices down hasn't cut the cost of food to the consumer. It has increased the cost of food; and wheat foods and wheat feeds are the best examples of that.

Spiking prices down hasn't spurred up production.

Food Production Waning.

Food production is on the wane. Let us not deceive ourselves about that! There are and will be fewer cows, fewer chickens, fewer hogs, fewer eggs, less milk, less cheese, less butter, less pork, less beef per capita than ever before in the history of this country. Divide the number of bushels of wheat raised last year (not dollar values) by our population—and see where you come out! We haven't enough for ourselves, let alone the 500,000,000 bushels we should send to war torn Europe.

Can prices be doubled to the producer and halved to the consumer?

They can and must; and that is the real job of the Food Administrator if we are to foil world famine.

How?

By the reorganization of our food distribution.

There is no use charging all sins to our system of food distribution. We have no system. That is the curse. It is into that gap the Food Administrator must jump.

There is no use charging the high cost of living to food profiteers. That is simply "passing the buck" to the middleman to ease our own alarm, whistling to keep our courage up in the dark. If there were no middlemen New York and every other large city would starve in twenty-four hours. We learned what it meant not to have surplus coal in storage last winter. Don't let us have to learn the same lesson on food. The cost would come too high.

Wants Wheat Price Boosted.

For where we are paying what is tantamount to \$7 a bushel for wheat as consumers (plaster of paris kiln dried frosted corn flour included) the farmer is getting only \$2.25 for his wheat. Give him half the \$7 we are paying and he would raise wheat enough to feed the world.

While we are paying from 12 to 15 cents a quart for milk—and babies are dying for lack of it—farmers are getting from 5 to 6 cents, and some can't sell at that. Let the farmer get 8 cents year in and year out—30 per cent. less than consumers are paying—and he will raise cows enough and milk enough to glut a hungry world.

So one could go down on the list of all food products.

The war will not be won by spiking down prices.

It will only be won by abundance of food.

Can Hoover jump into the gap and bring producers and consumers together? Those who know him best think he can if he is given a free hand.

Honors Our Boys Can Win

THOUGH the American Government has authorized the award of a Distinguished Service Medal and a Distinguished Service Cross, the Congressional Medal of Honor seems likely to remain one of the rarest and most highly prized war honors of the world.

Recipients of this decoration belong in the innermost sanctuary of the national temple of fame. It can be awarded only by joint resolution of Congress, approved by the President. The first of the recipients was Washington himself, to whom the Continental Congress voted in 1776 a gold medal and the nation's thanks for having caused the British evacuation of Boston.

Since then more than forty joint resolutions of the Congress have conferred this honor upon conspicuous heroes of our various wars. But peace hath her victories also, and many deeds of civilian glory have been recognized by the bestowal of national medals in gold.

Gold medals were voted in 1858 to Dr. Elisha Kent Kane, the Arctic explorer, and his brother officers as a testimonial to their bravery during the expedition for the rescue of Sir John Franklin. Dr. Kane, a surgeon in the United States Navy, sailed in search of Franklin in 1853, enlisted Eskimo recruits, made a farthest north record and discovered Humboldt Glacier.

After being deserted by a portion of his company and having to abandon his ship he moved his boats and his sick sixty miles over the ice, and after a thrilling experience of two years managed to reach Cape York. Besides being voted a medal by Congress Dr. Kane was given the Queen's Medal by the British Government.

In 1858 also Dr. Frederick Henry Rose of the British navy was voted a gold medal by the Congress for risking his life to attend yellow fever patients on the United States man-of-war *Susquehanna*. Fever had broken out on the vessel while she lay at Jamaica, and Dr. Rose at great personal risk not only boarded her but sailed in her to New York, devoting himself to the care of the sick en route.

Commodore Vanderbilt received a gold medal in 1862 for presenting his steamship *Vanderbilt* to the Government. The vessel, which was almost new, had been built at a cost of about \$1,000,000 and had broken the transatlantic speed record.

Cyrus W. Field and George Peabody were voted medals in 1867. Field was honored for having laid the Atlantic cable and Peabody for his beneficence in giving \$2,000,000 for the promotion of education in the more destitute of the Southern and Southwestern States. A short time before these awards were made Capt. Creighton, Low and Stauffer of the merchant vessels *Three Bells*, *Kilby* and *Ant-*

arctic had received medals for gallant conduct in rescuing 500 Americans from the wreck of the steamship *San Francisco* in 1853.

A gold medal and \$500 were voted in 1871 to George F. Robinson, who saved the life of Secretary Seward from the assassin Payne. Robinson had fought in the civil war until severely wounded. After having been in a hospital nearly a year he was detailed to act as nurse to Secretary Seward, who was confined to his bed with a broken jaw and arm resulting from a runaway accident.

On the night of Lincoln's assassination Payne gained entrance to the sickroom and attacked Seward with a knife. Robinson seized the assailant as the blade was about to be buried in the Secretary's throat. He dragged Payne away and in grappling with him received two stab wounds from which he afterward became partially paralyzed. Returning to the bedside and disregarding his own wounds he kept a finger pressed against the severed artery of the unconscious Secretary of State until a surgeon arrived.

Capt. Jared S. Crandall, keeper of the lighthouse at Westerly, R. I., and his volunteer crew of nine men received medals in 1873 for saving thirty-two persons from the wreck of the steamship *Metis* in Long Island Sound, August 31, 1872.

In 1874 Congress voted a medal to John Horn, Jr., of Detroit, who at various times had saved more than a hundred persons from drowning in the Detroit River.

Thereafter no Congressional medals were awarded for fourteen years, but in 1888 the honor was conferred on Joseph Francis of Boston, inventor of the life ear, for "his lifelong services to his country and to humanity." This medal, four inches in diameter, was the largest which the mint has ever stamped except the military medal received by Gen. U. S. Grant.

George Wallace Melville, long Chief Engineer of the Navy, received a gold medal in 1889. Although not a civilian, the services which won this reward were rendered upon a mission of peace. Melville sailed for the polar regions with De Long in the *Jeannette* in 1879. Two years later the vessel sank in the ice.

The two men reached land with some of the crew, but were separated from each other by 150 miles, and all but two of Melville's men perished. Melville refused to seek safety for himself until he had found the bodies of De Long and his companions four months later.

It was nearly twenty years after Melville received his medal before Congress awarded other national decorations. In 1908 it voted medals in gold to Wilbur and Orville Wright "for their ability, courage and success in navigating the air."